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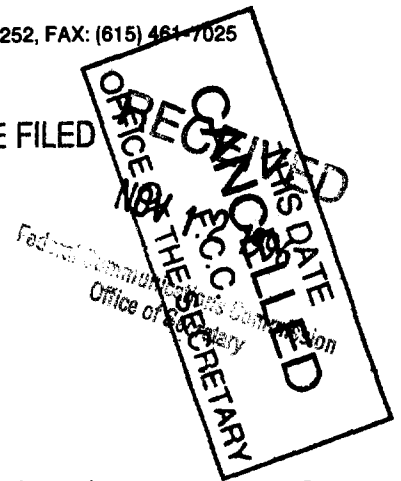
East Tennessee State University
James H. Quillen College of Medicine

Medical Library • Box 70693 • Johnson City, Tennessee 37614-0693 • (615) 929-6252, FAX: (615) 461-7025

May 15, 1996

EX PARTE OR LATE FILED

Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, NW
Room 222
Washington, DC 20554



Dear Secretary:

I am writing in support of affordable telecommunications rates for libraries, schools, and rural health care providers. As a library Director involved with the training of rural health care professionals, I know the value of access to information for the poor and underserved.

I advocate adoption of American Library Association recommendations to the Federal Communications Commission. Local communities and library users can benefit from library telecommunications services because of affordable rates. Libraries need the capabilities to support high bandwidth, interactive applications. Discount rates in poor, rural areas would help in overcoming the numerous barriers that people living in such areas have by opening the doors of access to consumers and businesses.

Everyone needs access to the Internet. In the very near future, it will be as basic to American life as the telephone and the television. As libraries provide access to books that many could not afford to buy for themselves, libraries can provide access to networked information. Discounts to libraries in the prices of books, rather than harming the booksellers, have improved book sales by increasing literacy and consumer demand for books. Discounts to libraries in the pricing of telecommunications services will provide similar results for the marketers of those services. Affordable telecommunications pricing for libraries and schools will serve the producers as well as the American public, both now and in the future.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Janet S. Fisher".

Janet S. Fisher
Assistant Dean/Learning Resources

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Sincerely yours,

Martha Earl
Associate Professor

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Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, NW, Rm. 222
Washington, D.C. 20554

Greetings,

I am writing to applaud your work on the Telecommunications Act of 1996. For the first time ever libraries, schools, and rural health care providers have been included in mandated affordable telecommunications rates under the act's universal service provisions. This is a very important and exciting concept for small rural libraries such as ours in Ozona, Texas. We do not have access to any large metropolitan libraries' collections or services, so communications are very important to us. We are getting connected to the Internet and working on networking our Library System. We desperately need help to enable us to share resources and keep costs to a minimum. We are working to provide all of our patrons with the best and most comprehensive access to information that we can afford. The universal services provisions of the Telecommunications Act will certainly help us to reach our goal.

I wholeheartedly endorse the American Library Association's proposal that was submitted as part of Docket # 96-45 on universal service. I especially want to emphasize the following key points:

- * An expansive definition of discounted services for libraries which includes all telecommunications services available;
- * Emphasis on the need to support high bandwidth, interactive library applications in libraries and schools;
- * Discount rates for telecommunications services should be (1) the lowest price offered to any customer, or (2) a wholesale price or fair cost price that is based on the Total Service Long Run Incremental Costs (TS-LRIC) of a service, whichever is lower;
- * Libraries in rural, insular and high-cost areas should receive deeper discounts because of the special barriers to affordable connections;
- * Core universal services for the residential consumers should be defined, at the very least, as the level of technology required for entry level access to the Internet;
- * Certification and eligibility requirements should not be onerous, should provide accountability, and should include libraries and schools that participate in appropriate cooperative network arrangements.

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I will be urging the Texas Public Utilities Commission to support universal services policies under the new act, and also my state representatives to support intrastate telecommunications rates for libraries and schools.

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Thank you so much for your work on the Telecommunications Act and your support for affordable telecommunications rates for libraries as part of Docket #96-45 on universal service. Our small library needs all the help we can get to allow us to provide the services wanted and needed by our patrons.

Sincerely,



Louise P. Ledoux
Crockett County Librarian